

MAR 2025

# ScandAsia



## **BUSINESS:**

IKEA Malaysia launches online store for customers in Sabah and Sarawak

## **INTERNATIONAL:**

Nordic embassies may get free land in Nusantara, the new capital of Indonesia

## **COMMUNITY:**

SWEA Bangkok's annual meeting with Ambassador Hammargren regional

# Muay Thai and Mindfulness in Pai



# OPEN DAY



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TUESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> MARCH  
4:00pm - 6:00pm



## EARLY PRIMARY

THURSDAY 20<sup>th</sup> MARCH  
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## PRIMARY

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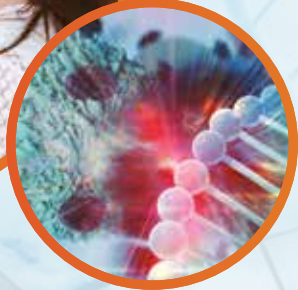
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# Dear Reader,

Welcome to a new edition of ScandAsia, where we bring you the latest from Nordic communities across Southeast Asia. This month's stories highlight the growing presence of Nordic businesses, deepening diplomatic ties, and inspiring personal journeys across the region.

Nordic businesses continue to expand. IKEA Malaysia has launched an online store for customers in Sabah and Sarawak, while LEGO's billion-dollar factory in Vietnam is set to open soon, reinforcing the country's role in global manufacturing. Swedish textile firm Syre is investing in polyester recycling in Vietnam, and Carlsberg is strengthening its position in China's premium beer market despite economic challenges.

Diplomatic relations remain strong. Nordic Day 2025 in Bangkok emphasized shared commitments to trade, sustainability, and security. Finland and Vietnam are enhancing cooperation in governance and innovation, while Norway is expanding seafood trade with the Philippines. Denmark is engaging with Cambodia on maritime infrastructure, and Nordic embassies may soon relocate to Indonesia's new capital, Nusantara.

Culture and education also play a key role. Thai students are experiencing Finland's education system first-hand, while a Swedish actor is introducing Peking Opera to young audiences. The Norwegian Church in Pattaya hosted a confirmation camp for young Scandinavians, reinforcing community ties far from home. Meanwhile, a Swedish parliamentary delegation recently visited Malaysia to strengthen political and social connections.

Personal stories remind us of the deep connections between the Nordics and Southeast Asia. Danish divers are leading cave explorations in Indonesia, a Swedish footballer has found a new path in Thailand through yoga and meditation, and young Danes are immersing themselves in Muay Thai training in Pai. These journeys reflect the spirit of adventure and cultural exchange that define Nordic engagement in the region.

As always, ScandAsia remains dedicated to keeping you informed and connected. Whether you are a long-term resident, a newcomer, or a business professional looking to expand your network, we hope this edition offers valuable insights and a sense of belonging.

Happy reading!



**Gregers Moller**  
Editor in Chief

## ScandAsia

ScandAsia is a printed magazine and online media covering the people and businesses of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland living and working in China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar.

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**Publisher :**  
Scandinavian Publishing Co., Ltd.  
211 Prasert Manukitch 29  
Prasert Manukitch Road  
Bangkok 10230, Thailand  
Tel. +66 2 943 7166-8  
Fax: +66 2 943 7169  
E-mail: [news@scandasia.com](mailto:news@scandasia.com)

**Editor-in-Chief :**  
Gregers A.W. Møller  
[gregers@scandasia.com](mailto:gregers@scandasia.com)

**Advertising :**  
Finn Balslev  
[finn@scandmedia.com](mailto:finn@scandmedia.com)  
MB: +66 81 866 2577

**Graphic Designer :**  
Peerapol Meesuan  
[Peerapol@scandmedia.com](mailto:Peerapol@scandmedia.com)

**Production Manager:**  
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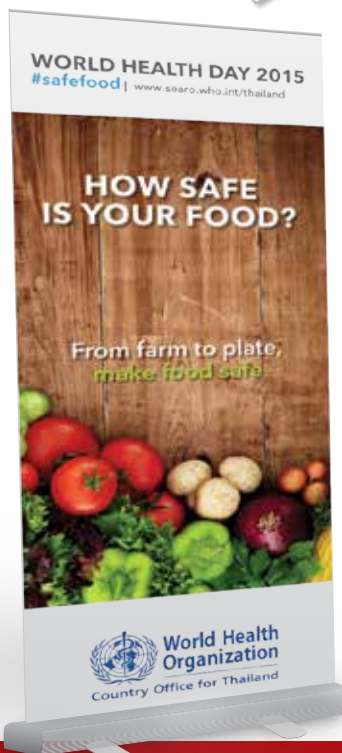
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# Finland's ambassador to China presents credentials in Mongolia



Finland's Ambassador Mikko Kinnunen has officially presented a copy of his credentials to Mongolia's Foreign Ministry's State Secretary, L. Munkhtushig, during his first official visit to Ulaanbaatar on February 6, 2025.

The meeting highlighted the strong bilateral relations between Mongolia and Finland, as well as discussions on Finland's upcoming Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2025.

Ambassador Kinnunen's accreditation to Mongolia reflects Finland's commitment to strengthening diplomatic ties with the country and expanding cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

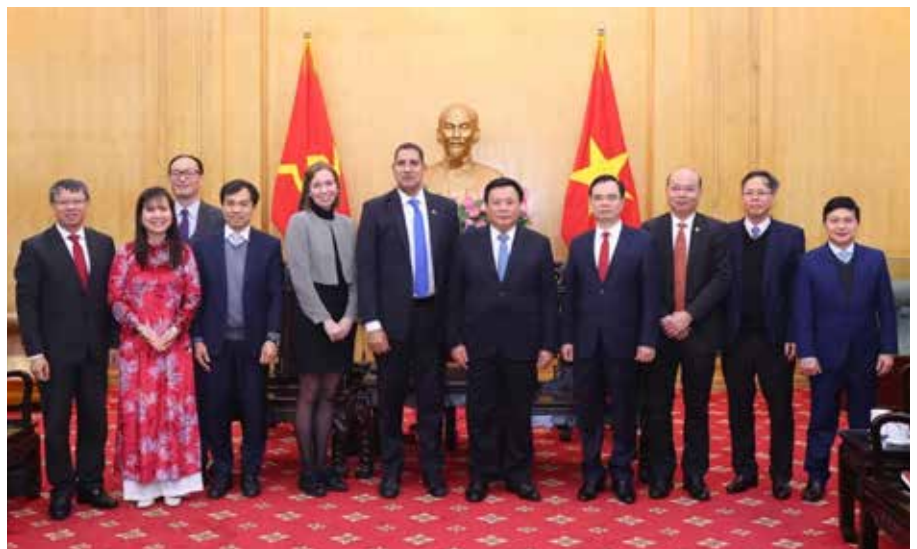
This visit further reinforces Finland's engagement in the region, particularly in the context of its role within international organizations such as the OSCE.

# Vietnam and Sweden enhance cooperation in policy research and public administration

Vietnam and Sweden are strengthening their collaboration in policy research and public administration, focusing on digital transformation, green transition, and sustainable development.

Nguyen Xuan Thang, Politburo member, President of the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics (HCMA), and Chairman of the Central Theory Council, met with Swedish Ambassador to Vietnam, Johan Ndisi, in Hanoi on 19 February 2025. During the meeting, Thang highlighted Vietnam's interest in learning from Sweden's public administration model, particularly as the country continues its political system reforms.

Thang proposed greater cooperation between the HCMA and Swedish institutions in key areas such as innovation, women's lead-



ership, and administrative reform. Additionally, he suggested organizing a seminar in celebration of Nordic Day 2025 and conducting training programs focused on governance improvements.

Ambassador Ndisi reaffirmed Sweden's commitment to supporting Vietnam's efforts in these areas and expressed a willingness to facilitate closer cooperation between Swedish agencies and the HCMA.

# Big turnout for Nordic Day 2025 in Bangkok

On February 13, the Nordic embassies in Bangkok jointly celebrated Nordic Day 2025 with a grand reception at the Norwegian Ambassador's residence. The event welcomed over 400 guests, including senior Thai officials, diplomats, business leaders, and representatives of Nordic institutions, highlighting the unity and shared values of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

Nordic Day has replaced individual national day celebrations, strengthening the sense of regional cooperation. The evening featured speeches from the four Nordic ambassadors—H.E. Astrid Emilie Helle (Norway), H.E. Danny Annan (Denmark), H.E. Kristiina Kuvaja-

Xanthopoulos (Finland), and H.E. Anna Hammargren (Sweden). They emphasized the importance of Nordic collaboration in tackling global challenges such as climate change, gender equality, and security.

Thai Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Dr. Lalivan Karnchanachari, delivered a keynote address highlighting growing Thai-Nordic economic ties. She noted the ongoing Free Trade Agreement negotiations between Thailand and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which are expected to enhance trade and investment.

The evening also celebrated Nordic cultural heritage with traditional music and dance. Sustainability remained a key theme, with speak-



ers stressing the need for green initiatives and innovation.

Nordic Day 2025 concluded with a shared commitment to strengthening ties with Thailand and ASEAN. The event, widely covered on social media, reaffirmed the region's long-standing diplomatic and economic partnerships.

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# Indonesia, Norway extend climate and forestry cooperation



Indonesia and Norway have agreed to extend their climate and forestry cooperation through 2030, focusing on reducing deforestation and promoting sustainable forest management. This decision was announced during a meeting in Jakarta on February 19, 2025, between Indonesian Forestry Minister Raja Juli Antoni and Norwegian Climate and Environment Minister Andreas Bjelland Eriksen.

Minister Antoni highlighted the success of the Result-Based Contri-

bution (RBC) funding mechanism, which has seen four phases totaling US\$216 million. The latest phase, launched in December 2024, aims to protect forests and enhance community welfare through initiatives like social forestry. These funds have also supported the Community Fund Service for the Environment, now in its second period, enabling grassroots projects to combat climate change.

Minister Eriksen praised the 75-year diplomatic relationship be-

tween the two nations and their collaborative efforts in addressing environmental challenges. He noted significant achievements, including a reduction in deforestation rates, and emphasized the importance of the RBC funding in helping Indonesia reach its Forestry and Other Land Use (FOLU) Net Sink 2030 target, where carbon absorption surpasses emissions in the sector.

In addition to financial support, both countries are exploring further collaboration in areas such as carbon emissions reduction, environmental pollution control, and the conservation of mangroves and peatlands. This partnership underscores a shared commitment to sustainable environmental practices and the global fight against climate change.

The extended cooperation reflects a mutual dedication to environmental sustainability and sets a precedent for international partnerships aimed at combating climate change.

# Danish Security Expert: Taiwan needs enhanced defense preparedness

Jonas Parello-Plesner, Executive Director of the Alliance of Democracies Foundation and former Danish diplomat, has released a new book titled "The Battle for Taiwan," analyzing Taiwan's geopolitical significance and current security challenges. He presented his work at the Czech Hub in Taiwan on Wednesday evening.

Parello-Plesner was inspired by former Digital Minister Audrey Tang's 2022 remarks on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and cyber resil-

ience. As the third anniversary of the invasion approaches, he expressed concern over the potential decline in U.S. support for Ukraine.

In his book, Parello-Plesner examines Taiwan's war readiness from multiple perspectives, suggesting that the nation could benefit from improved defense preparations. He has also extended invitations to Taiwanese representatives to attend the Alliance of Democracies' Copenhagen Democracy Summit.

This development underscores



the growing international discourse on Taiwan's strategic position and the importance of bolstering its defense capabilities amid evolving global security dynamics.

# Finland stops berry pickers from arriving as tourists

Since February 17, 2025, Finland has implemented new regulations requiring foreign berry pickers to be employed under a contractual relationship and obtain a seasonal work permit before entering the country. These changes aim to improve workers' rights and ensure fair compensation.

Previously, many foreign pickers, particularly from Thailand and Vietnam, entered Finland on Schengen tourist visas, allowing them to stay and pick berries for up to three months. However, concerns have been raised regarding their working conditions, earnings, and instances of exploitation, including charges of human trafficking. In response, the Finnish government outlined in May 2024 that wild berry picking



should be recognized as seasonal work within an employment relationship, leading to the recent legislative amendments.

These changes are part of the government's broader action plan to prevent work-related exploitation. The authorities will monitor

the effects of the new regulations and, if necessary, introduce further measures to combat exploitation in the berry sector. It's important to note that these changes will not affect the rights of Finnish residents to pick wild berries and sell them as they choose.

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# Nordic embassies in Manila strengthen efforts against online child abuse



The Nordic embassies in Manila, in collaboration with the Nordic Liaison Office (NLO) Manila, are intensifying efforts to combat Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC). This crime has established links between the Philippines and the five Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

Deputy Head of Mission Peter Dalberg from the Danish Embassy recently met with representatives from Save the Children Foundation (Red Barnet Denmark) and cybercrime specialists from Danish and Norwegian police forces. Discussions focused on collaborative strategies to strengthen the fight against OSAEC.

During the meeting, Save the Children introduced AnmeldDet, an internet hotline that allows citizens to report child sexual abuse materials anonymously. The platform aims to raise awareness and encourage public participation in combating online exploitation.

Since its establishment in March 2020, NLO Manila has supported Nordic authorities in handling approximately 185 sexual offense cases linked to the region. The office operates under a four-pillar framework: **Prevention and advocacy, Prosecution and law enforcement, Protection and reintegration of children, and Partnership and networking.**

The Nordic embassies reaffirm their commitment to working with law enforcement and organizations to protect children from online exploitation. Their collaborative efforts reflect the shared Nordic-Philippine dedication to tackling this urgent global issue.

# RSF demands answers on missing Swedish publisher Gui Minhai

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is calling on Chinese authorities to provide information on the whereabouts of Swedish publisher Gui Minhai, who has been missing for years after being sentenced to ten years in prison on politically motivated charges.

Gui, known for publishing books critical of the Chinese government, was first abducted in 2015 from Thailand, later resurfacing in Chinese custody. Despite international pressure, he was sentenced



in 2020 for allegedly “illegally providing intelligence abroad.” Since then, his location and condition remain unknown, with no updates

provided to his family or Swedish authorities.

RSF is demanding transparency and urging Sweden, the European Union, and the international community to increase pressure on Beijing to release Gui and clarify his status. The press freedom group warns that his case is part of a broader crackdown on independent voices in China, where detained journalists and publishers often face secret trials and prolonged isolation.

# Nordic embassies may get land for free in Nusantara, the new capital of Indonesia

The Indonesian government is considering offering free land to foreign embassies in Nusantara, the country's future capital in East Kalimantan, to encourage their relocation from Jakarta. Basuki Hadimuljono, Head of the Nusantara Authority, has proposed the initiative, but the final decision rests with President Prabowo Subianto.

The government has set aside 62.9 hectares for a diplomatic compound, aiming to position Nusantara as Indonesia's "political capital" by 2028. If approved, the offer could expedite embassy relocations and strengthen Indonesia's diplomatic presence in the new capital.

There is no indication, however, that the Nordic embassies of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and



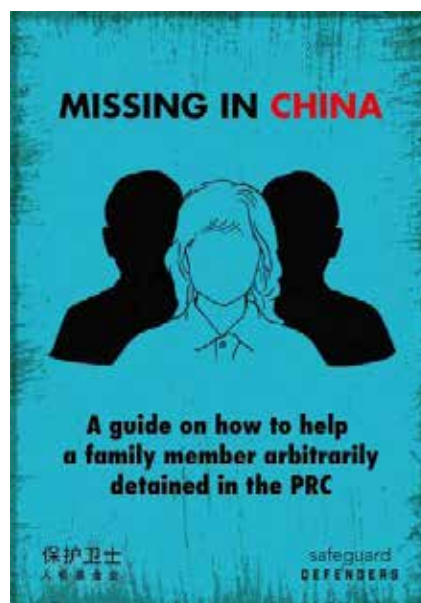
Sweden are planning to relocate, even if offered free land. Many embassies are likely to take a cautious approach, assessing factors such as

infrastructure readiness, logistical challenges, and long-term diplomatic strategy before making a decision.

# New guide warns of risks for foreigners detained in China

A new guide published by human rights organization Safeguard Defenders aims to help families and friends of foreigners detained in China navigate the country's opaque legal system. The guide, titled *Missing in China: A Guide for Families of Detainees*, provides practical steps on what to do when a loved one is arrested or goes missing in China, highlighting the risks of arbitrary detention, forced confessions, and lack of consular access.

Foreign nationals—including businesspeople, academics, and even tourists—have been detained in China under broad national se-



curity laws, sometimes as a means of political leverage. The guide details how China's legal system differs from international norms and offers strategies to ensure detainees' rights are protected.

Safeguard Defenders urges those traveling to or doing business in China to be aware of these risks and recommends that organizations and individuals download and share the guide to spread awareness. The resource is available on their website and serves as an essential tool for those who may find themselves or their loved ones facing detention in China.

# Danish Ambassador discusses maritime infrastructure with Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister



Danish ambassador to Cambodia, Danny Annan, met with Cambodia's deputy prime minister and first vice president of the Cambodia Development Council, Sun Chanthol, on

Tuesday 25 February 2025, to discuss Cambodia's strategic plans for port development and maritime infrastructure.

During the meeting, Sun Chanthol outlined the Cambodian government's priorities in expanding the country's deepwater ports and enhancing capacity in key coastal provinces, including Sihanoukville, Kampot, and Koh Kong. He also highlighted the Jikfunontejo Creek Project, which aims to improve connectivity in waterway transportation.

Ambassador Annan, whose background includes expertise in

maritime transport and ports, expressed interest in Cambodia's efforts to modernize its infrastructure. The Danish delegation will now review the insights shared during the meeting as part of a broader assessment of potential opportunities for engagement in the sector.

The meeting concluded according to a Facebook post by the Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister with both sides reaffirming their commitment to strengthening diplomatic ties between Denmark and Cambodia.

# Senate Committee on Education had dinner with Finnish Ambassador

The Senate Committee on Education, Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation, led by Chairman Mr. Kamol Rodklai, was on 24 February 2025 invited by H.E. Mrs. Eva Kristiina Kuvaja-Xanthopoulos, Ambassador of the Republic of Finland to Thailand, for a dinner at the Finnish Ambassador's residence in Thailand.

On this occasion, the committee was welcomed by Dr. Annika Vatanen (Advisor on Education, Labor, and Migration), Dr. Mika Tirronen (Advisor and Expert on Higher Education and Science Policy), Mr. Kai Tuorila (Advisor on Trade and Investment), and other embassy officials. The discussions focused on Finland's education system in preparation for the committee's upcoming visit to Finland. The meeting also included a



presentation on the planned itinerary for the committee's study visit and bilateral meetings in Finland and Estonia in May 2025.

The primary objective of this visit is to exchange knowledge and

best practices, particularly by studying Finland's education system, which is recognized as one of the most efficient in the world. The insights gained will be used to further develop Thailand's education system.

# Swedish Parliamentary Delegation Visits Malaysia for Bilateral Discussions

A Swedish parliamentary delegation recently visited Malaysia as part of a diplomatic initiative to strengthen bilateral relations and deepen their understanding of the country's political and social landscape. The delegation included Third Deputy Speaker Kerstin Lundgren, Matilda Ernkrans (S), Joar Forssell (L), and Yasmine Eriksson (SD), who engaged in discussions with key Malaysian officials and civil society representatives.

One of the highlights of the visit was a meeting with YB Senator Dato' Dr. Haji Mohd Na'im Mokhtar, Malaysia's Minister of Religious Affairs. The discussions revolved around Malaysia's policies on religious governance, interfaith dialogue, and human rights.

The delegation exchanged views on religious freedom, governance frameworks, and social policies, aiming to foster mutual understanding between Sweden and Malaysia in these areas.



Beyond government meetings, the delegation also engaged with representatives from local civil society organizations. These included AOD Malaysia, Initiate.my, Teach for Malaysia, Sisters in Islam, IMAN Research

FYI KL, Monsters Among Us, DHRRRA Malaysia, Family Frontiers, Undi18, Justice for Sisters.

These groups advocate for human rights, gender equality, education reform, and youth empowerment in Malaysia. The delegation's interaction with these organizations provided them with grassroots insights into key social and political

issues affecting various communities in the country.

As part of their visit, the Swedish delegation attended high-level discussions hosted by the Swedish Embassy in Malaysia. These meetings focused on enhancing Sweden-Malaysia cooperation, particularly in areas such as governance, democracy, and cultural exchange.

The visit underscores Sweden's commitment to strengthening diplomatic ties with Malaysia, fostering dialogue on governance, and supporting the work of civil society organizations in the region.

## Swedish ambassador visits Polarium's energy storage factory in Vietnam



Swedish Ambassador to Vietnam, Johan Ndisi, recently visited the Polarium factory in Hai Phong, highlighting the strong Swedish-Vietnamese cooperation in sustainable energy solutions.

Polarium, a Swedish company specializing in safe, smart, and sustainable energy storage, manufactures advanced battery solutions in Vietnam for global markets. The company's technology plays a key role in harnessing wind and solar energy, ensuring a reliable supply of

clean power even during nighttime or low-wind conditions.

During the visit, Ambassador Ndisi and the Embassy of Sweden in Hanoi team toured the facility and engaged with Polarium's leadership, emphasizing Sweden's commitment to green energy innovation and industrial collaboration in Vietnam.

"Swedish expertise at Polarium is truly driving the transition to a greener future," says Ambassador Johan Ndisi in a post on his Facebook page.

# Former Danish Consul General in Chongqing in new job in Asia



Lars Lund Rasmussen, who served as Denmark's Consul General in Chongqing, China, from February 2017 to August 2019, has taken on a new role as General Manager of Famobra GmbH's operations in the APAC region from

in Singapore, where he is based. His career has been deeply connected to Danish business interests in Asia, blending diplomacy, trade, and recruitment expertise.

As head of mission in Chongqing, he represented Denmark and Danish interests across Chongqing, Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou provinces, leading all activities of the Danish Trade Council in the region. Prior to that, he worked in recruitment for the logistics sector in Asia and held roles at Salling Group, a major Scandinavian retail company.

"Having lived and worked in Asia for many years, I have a deep understanding of the market and its culture," he says, reflecting on his

long-standing engagement with the region.

Lars Lund Rasmussen's latest position is within Famobra GmbH, a subsidiary of the Fleggaard Group, a Danish family-owned company headquartered in Kruså, Denmark, near the German border.

Famobra distributes and sells goods within Fast-moving consumer goods. It is based in Harrislee, a suburb of Flensburg and distributes goods to over 400 customers in 50 countries. Its leadership remains strongly Danish. Morten Ryholl Skjerning, CEO of Famobra Group, is also Danish, further reinforcing the Nordic presence in the company's expansion into Asia.

## Norway and the Philippines strengthen seafood trade ties at inaugural roundtable

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Manila, in collaboration with Seafood from Norway, recently hosted the first-ever seafood roundtable in the Philippines, bringing together key stakeholders to discuss opportunities for expanding seafood trade between the two nations.

The event, attended by representatives from the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Bureau of Customs, and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, focused on maximizing the benefits of the Philippines' Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Norway under EFTA.

Ambassador Christian Lyster



highlighted the growing trade relationship, noting a 16% increase in Norwegian salmon exports to the Philippines in 2025 compared to the previous year.

Norwegian Seafood Council Director Åshild Nakken described

the Philippines as a "hidden gem" in the region, emphasizing its untapped potential for seafood trade and predicting growth in the healthy food market.

As part of the program, attendees participated in a Yusheng salad tossing ceremony featuring Norwegian salmon, a symbolic gesture for good luck and prosperity in the year ahead.

The roundtable provided a valuable platform for dialogue between seafood importers, exporters, and government agencies, with participants expressing interest in continuing discussions to further strengthen trade relations between Norway and the Philippines.

# Swedish Textile Firm Syre Plans \$1 Billion Polyester Recycling Plant in Central Vietnam

Sweden's Syre Group has announced plans to invest between \$700 million and \$1 billion in a high-tech polyester fiber recycling facility in Binh Dinh province, central Vietnam. The proposed plant aims to process approximately 250,000 metric tons of textile waste annually, converting it into raw materials for the garment and other industries.

During a meeting on Tuesday 18 February 2025 with the Binh Dinh provincial People's Committee, Syre's operations director, Tim King, highlighted challenges related to sourcing sufficient raw materials. The factory would require around 300,000 to 400,000 metric tons of input annually; however, domestic sources can only supply about 40,000 to 60,000 metric tons, necessitating imports. Currently, Vietnam-

ese regulations classify used clothing and fabrics as banned imports, posing a potential hurdle for the project's material needs.

King also raised concerns about the adequacy of Binh Dinh's electricity infrastructure to support the facility's large-scale, long-term energy demands. In response, Pham Anh Tuan, Chairman of the provincial People's Committee, affirmed the government's commitment to creating favorable conditions for sustainable investments. He indicated that regulations prohibiting the import of used textiles might be reconsidered and assured that the province would strive to meet Syre's energy requirements.

Syre, founded in 2023, is dedicated to decarbonizing and reducing waste in the textile industry through large-scale textile-to-textile recy-



cling. The company plans to establish multiple production plants worldwide, aiming to produce over 3 million metric tons of circular polyester within the next decade.

This investment aligns with Vietnam's goals of promoting sustainable development and transitioning towards a circular economy. The successful implementation of Syre's project could position Binh Dinh as a hub for innovative recycling technologies in the region.

# Thailand honors Norwegian explorer Carl Bock with statue anointing



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand has commemorated the historical ties between Thailand and Norway with an anointing ceremony for a statue of Norwegian explorer and naturalist Carl Bock. The event took place on Monday 24 February 2025 at the preaching hall of Wat Saket Ratcha-

woramahawihan in Bangkok.

H.E. Dr. Lalivan Kanchanachari, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, attended the ceremony and delivered congratulatory remarks. The statue was sculpted by Thai artist Thawatchai Srisomphetch and will be exhibited at the Museum of Cultural History at the University of Oslo in Norway.

Carl Bock is known for his expeditions across Thailand in 1882, undertaken with the royal patronage and support of King Chulalongkorn. During his travels, he documented his observations in the book *Temples and Elephants*, which has been

widely recognized by scholars and historians across Europe. The book remains an important reference for studies on Thailand's historical and cultural landscape during the reign of King Chulalongkorn.

The statue, sculpted by Thawatchai Srisomphetch, reflects Bock's contributions to historical documentation. After the ceremony, it will be displayed at the Museum of Cultural History at the University of Oslo in Norway.

The event highlighted Thailand and Norway's cultural ties and honored Bock's role in introducing Thailand's heritage to the world.



# A month of adventure with Muay Thai in Pai

In a small, idyllic town deep in the mountainous regions of Thailand, where the lush green rainforest meets a laid-back hippie lifestyle, Danish brothers Julius and Carl-Emil Hauge Johansen have chosen to spend a month at a Muay Thai camp in Pai. As they prepare for their journey through Asia, they have dedicated this month to immerse themselves in the ancient martial art and the culture behind it.

By Karoline Rosenkrantz Paasch

Carl-Emil, 25, completed his bachelor's degree in biology last summer, while 21-year-old Julius graduated high school in the summer of 2023 and since has taken gap years during which he worked and traveled for six months in South America.

In addition to the mountains of Thailand, they plan to travel for six months through Southeast Asia, visiting countries such as Laos, Vietnam, China, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.

## A love for Pai

It was Carl-Emil's friend who first recommended Pai after visiting it during her own travels. She described it as a cozy area with fantastic food and a positive vibe, making it the perfect place to relax and train. Thus, there was no doubt for the brothers when it came to selecting the ideal location for their Muay Thai camp.

In the 5 months leading up to their arrival, they trained twice a week to prepare themselves, ensuring they wouldn't arrive as total beginners.

"We wanted to feel ready for the challenge and not come in completely unprepared," Carl-Emil adds. This preparation paid off quickly, as the first few weeks in Pai offered immense growth—not only in their physical fitness but also in their mental strength and technique. "Our learning curve has seen an exponential increase," Julius notes enthusiastically, reflecting on the rapid progress they made in just a short time.

## Daily life at the camp

Days in Pai start early. At 7 AM, the alarm goes off, and training begins at 8. For two hours, they sweat it out, building their skills. Breakfast usually consists of rice with various sides—a simple yet nourishing start. After training, there is a five-hour break for a nap or relaxation by

“

*I thought that people who trained Muay Thai were very aggressive, but I now understand that it's actually a beautiful sport focused on discipline and strategy.*

”

*Julius*



“

*The more I learn, the more I see how deeply Muay Thai integrates with Thai culture. It's about discipline, honor, and respect for one another.*

”

*Carl-Emil*

the pool, and they have the option to grab an extra lunch if hunger strikes. “It’s a good balance between hard work and downtime,” The brothers note.

At 3 PM, it’s time for the second training session, again lasting two hours. This is followed by a short mingling session, providing them with the opportunity to share experiences with fellow camp guests. “We always say thank you and shake everyone’s hand after practice, so it can take some time.”

Then dinner which mirrors breakfast: rice with sides. “But it is never the same as breakfast,” Carl-Emil says. In the evenings, they unwind by watching the series while enjoying sweet treats from the local night market—pancakes, fruits, whatever is available—shared as they reflect on the day’s training.

### The training program

The training is intense and structured. Each session begins with 15 minutes of skipping. They then stretch, an important part of the training that prepares them for the demanding exercises ahead. Also they have to do a routine of skipping, 10 push-ups and 20 sit-ups every 5 minutes during their 2 hours training.

There are three different levels at the camp: beginners, intermediate, and advanced, who are fighters. Julius and Carl-Emil are both in the intermediate group, where they learn various combos with a partner, and for about half of the time, they work directly with trainers who help refine their techniques. The trainers include former pro-





professional fighters, and their backgrounds provide deeper insights into the sport.

"It's all about mastering the fundamentals first," Carl-Emil emphasizes.

Each session ends with body conditioning through strength training and stretching. Alongside the other participants, they share high-fives and build a strong bond. Being part of this community—both on and off the mat—is an unforgettable aspect of the experience.

## Adventures outside the camp

On their days off, they go on adventures to explore the surrounding area. They hike to the nearest waterfalls and mountains, soaking in the breathtaking nature and the relaxed atmosphere that Pai is renowned for. Here, they also find time to reflect on how Muay Thai has altered their views on sport and community.

## A new understanding of Muay Thai

Initially, Julius had a preconceived notion of Muay Thai, often associated with aggression and violence. However, after their experiences at the camp, they have been able to witness a completely different side of the sport. They have learned that Muay Thai is fundamentally a sport based on respect—for the opponent, the instructors, and themselves.

Julius reflects, "I thought that people who trained

Muay Thai were very aggressive, but I now understand that it's actually a beautiful sport focused on discipline and strategy. You learn to respect both your opponent and yourself."

Carl-Emil adds, "It's fascinating how the sport is structured. The techniques are so thought out, and there is a depth in the training that we didn't expect. It has also been rewarding to train with people from all over the world, who all share the same passion."

When reflecting on Muay Thai and Thai culture in general, Carl-Emil adds:

"The more I learn, the more I see how deeply Muay Thai integrates with Thai culture. It's about discipline, honor, and respect for one another."

## Anticipations for the coming months

After a month of intensive training in Pai, new destinations await them on their itinerary. They look forward to traveling to Laos, Vietnam, and the rest of Southeast Asia. "We are excited to meet new people, experience different cultures, and of course, enjoy delicious food," Julius smiles.

Their journey is not only an opportunity to improve their Muay Thai skills but also a way to create memories for a lifetime. With their time in Pai behind them, they feel ready to embrace the world with open arms.



# Danish-owned Kubikle rolls out innovation to deliver space-efficient, customisable living spaces

Its 'Micro housing' is making inroads in Oceanian countries

*By Joakim Persson*



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*We have developed the Japanese-style sleep pods further into what we call ‘mikro’ rooms, and there we are unique – since it doesn’t really exist anywhere else.*

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**D**espite all the hardships, many new businesses and ideas were brought to fruition as a result of Covid-19. Kubikle, a firm at the forefront of creating cutting-edge modular accommodation, is a testament to this. Significant business disruption meant that many people suddenly had a lot of unexpected time on their hands.

In the case of Kubikle’s Danish CEO, Knud Clausen, he found himself in Vietnam, having previously operated a business from China that provided shop interiors as well as built large hardware stores in Oceania and the Middle East. He ended up with skilled architects, craftsmen, and production specialists without tasks when business went quiet.

Knud then initiated R&D and development of what has resulted in a new, unique modular housing solution based on functionality while also offering “adaptable and future-ready spaces.”

His solution fits within the ‘Modular room system market’ - an industry within property and housing that incorporates by now well-known concepts (but for Knud new business segments) such as sleep and meeting pods, and prefab housing.

And here Kubikle has not merely entered an established market but is positioning itself as a prototyping player out to revolutionise living and working environ-

ments through innovative accommodation products and services. Already, what Knud calls ‘Micro housing’ has found its market within student accommodation, in Australia including the needs among 650 000 international students looking for a place to stay! So initially he is now delivering orders from clients there (and with keen interest from potential customers on other markets).

In 2H of 2024 Kubikle also expanded its production capacity with a significantly larger, 3,500 m<sup>2</sup> state-of-the-art factory outside Hanoi to allow for handling projects of any scale.

### Unparalleled, modular housing concepts with ‘Micro’ accommodation

Having studied the various market segments in detail, Kubikle has decided to concentrate on accommodation (especially long stay guests and employee lodging) and student housing.

These niche segments keep evolving based on market changes and new customer needs, such as the growing group of digital nomads and the growing need for – and in many places significant lack of – budget-friendly living options. The modular room system market is also propelled by technological advancements.





"I found out that the office pod market was very crowded and saturated with local products, whereas student accommodation is a much more lucrative and untapped segment," Knud comments on these focus areas for his innovative concept that is both designed and manufactured in-house. "We have developed the Japanese style sleep pods further into what we call 'mikro' rooms, and there we are unique - since it doesn't really exist anywhere else," Knud mentions as benchmarking. "So, for student accommodation, it's about literally being able to give people a private space - not a dormitory - but with a footprint of less than 6 square metres."

This compact living micro-room innovation is meticulously crafted featuring all essential amenities - that can include a refrigerator, safe, TV, wardrobe, a fold-up desk, a pull-down clothes rack, and more - everything one needs within a small, compact space. Ensuring optimal functionality and comfort are key. These modules come fully prepared and boast full insulation, pre-wiring and soundproofing features, and where an ensuite bathroom ('Kube') can be added. Among the materials, Danish Rockwool stone wool insulation is used, which is both fireproof and relatively soundproof.

"One configuration is basically like a set of bunk beds, where the top bunk goes out one side and the bottom bunk out the other way. So, each bed belongs to a separate room, and that can vary in size depending on whether it's premium or not. And they get to share common areas like co-working spaces, office pods, kitchen, gym and rooftop venue with outdoor seating. So that's

the upselling. We're basically like a one-stop-solution except for the building itself," explains the Dane.

"We sell a turnkey solution - that's the whole aim; to fit everything - kitchen, bathrooms etc. - delivered from the factory."

Assembly-wise it is based on an intricate system developed inhouse by Kubikle. Knud says that the flexibility of their system allows for unparalleled customisation such as flexible combinations, adapting to spatial circumstances or fulfilling customers' design requests.

Personalisation and branded design can also be accommodated with basically endless possibilities: It can, for instance be customised with various finishes for the wall panels or adding a unique skin (made through UV printing technology).

## Quick to build/assemble, yet qualitative

Quality is also in focus for Kubikle's competitive edge: "We're not going for the cheap end of the market; we're aiming for high quality. Actually, around 50 % of the materials used come from China, as they cannot be sourced in Vietnam."

Other than that, Knud underlines the importance of the cost-savings achieved from having the production in Vietnam, which results in significantly lower construction costs (a usual advantage with prefab).

"You're more effective when you build it completely in the factory, where Vietnam of course is a big advantage with its much lower labour cost compared to Australia. It's extremely quick to build; we can do a complete



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*There is definitely a need for an entirely new type of housing and to get enough of it provided in close vicinity of public transportation.*  
”

double room with wiring and everything in 3-4 hours, so basically you are shifting the labour content to Vietnam.”

For larger orders Kubikle sends a technician to guide and teach the tradesmen the assembly work for a few days - tasks that professionals will pick up fast.

Compliance is also demanding concerning housing, with Australia and New Zealand being among the strictest, where Kubikle is now approved, and, for instance, uses specifically approved MDF fibreboard. Expanding to other markets therefore also takes time and will therefore be dealt with one country at a time, informs Knud.

## Bridging the gap

As for the relatively small private area, in Australia regional students from China, India and Sri Lanka are jumping at the offer for micro housing: “Asians wanting to pay less are willing to accept less living space. Later, when it becomes acceptable, I think local students will start looking at it as well because of the price difference.”

In a country like Australia where property is very expensive and accommodation in high demand, this kind of modular housing can actually contribute to solve the challenges with urbanisation and the increasing need for ‘smart cities’

“There is definitely a need for an entirely new type of housing and to get enough of it provided in close vicinity of public transportation,” agrees Knud. “And they struggle to come up with a solution for affordable homes; hence I can see a gap in that part of the market.”

“What we’ve developed so far is basically micro housing – or ‘tiny homes.’ We also have an Australian cus-

tomor looking at this for normal housing needs; for beach resorts and also for retail stores. With the projects so far, we are literally only at the starting point.”

Elsewhere, hospitality operators – as with a case in Singapore – are looking at bridging the gap between the quality and the privacy of a boutique hotel versus the hostel affordability, and where ‘mikro’ rooms could be the game changer.

One project is for ‘digital nomad’ accommodation and with better quality than a dormitory. “That’s a segment where there really seems to be growth potential - especially in Asia. There are many sleeping pod lodges around and we’re on high end quality-wise compared to some of them. But people are willing to pay for that, and what seems to be key for digital nomads is to be able to have a community around them; having such spaces rather than staying isolated in a standard hotel room, even one at budget price. Therefore, the potential market is there even in countries like Thailand, where you think you could get some cheap accommodation, but where the social aspect is lacking.”

With its Kabin and Mikro rooms, Kubikle is a first-mover; having come up with a module system that has been extremely complex to develop. This gives an obvious market advantage as markets and segments are being approached.

Being first to market is always a good thing, and I think that even though there will be copies down the road you still have a future, looking at for example the continued sales within the office pod market.”

# Botox in Thailand: A Chat with Dr. Donna Robinson

Botox in Thailand, is for everyone, rich or poor, a lifestyle choice, not a secret! Botox is a topic that sparks curiosity and many questions, so it's great to get insights from an expert.

*By Agneta de Bekassy*

I met with Dr. Donna Robinson at her Med Consult Bangkok Medical Clinic on Sukhumvit Soi 49, same building as the Racket Club. She has extensive experience with this treatment, so I had an informative and nice chat with Dr. Donna and asked her a couple of questions concerning Botox.

## Is it good to get Botox?

"It depends on the individual and their goals," Dr. Donna explains.

"Botox is mainly used to reduce wrinkles and fine lines, but it can also help with medical conditions like migraines and excessive sweating. Botox can also be used as prevention. People with neck problems could, before agreeing to surgery, try out Botox, it's great for the neck and show great results."

## At what age do you recommend people to start Botox treatments?

"At around an age of your late 30's, I would say, but in certain cases it can be used in even younger age."

## Are there any side effects?

"Common side effects include swelling, bruising. It's important to have treatments done by an experienced doctor."

## How often should one get Botox?

"The effects typically last between 3-6 months. Many people get treatments two to three times a year to maintain results, but of course, it varies from individual to individual and also depends on the type of Botox you take."

## Which type of Botox should one choose?

"There are different brands, such as Botox (Allergan), Dysport, and Xeomin. Korean Botox is also very popular in Thailand and often used. The best choice depends on individual needs and the doctor's recommendation."

In Thailand, it is very common for both women and men to undergo Botox treatments. Here people seem quite open about it—there is no shame in admitting it, and many happily mention that they are heading for a Botox session during their lunch break. It might be of interest to mention that in almost all big shopping malls, there is a rejuvenate clinic that offers beauty treatments.

In several European countries, however, people tend to keep it quiet when they treat themselves to a bit of Botox. It seems more common in Europe to conceal it, even though the hope, of course, is that friends and acquaintances will comment on how wonderfully refreshed and well-rested you look.



The prices of Botox treatments can also vary significantly from country to country.

### Does getting Botox hurt?

Dr. Donna recommends ice for 5 minutes or applying a numbing cream beforehand, but not really needed. It should be left on for about 20 minutes to take effect, but the pain can be compared to a mosquito bite, she says. Fillers can cause a bit more pain though.

Having spent many years in the fashion industry, I have seen colleagues go under the knife – but unfortunately, not always with successful results. Of course, looking young is wonderful, but at what cost?

### You can achieve a face as smooth as a baby's, but what about the neck and hands?

Sure, there are procedures to address a wrinkled neck. Botox can even help to reduce an annoying double chin. But the hands – well, they will likely remain the same.

So here is the question: Have a Botox treatment or a face-lifting treatment – or live with your wrinkles and age with a kind of dignity? The choice is yours. Whatever you do, or not do, just stand up for it.

Now, one shouldn't think that Dr. Donna's clinic only offers Botox. No, we English-speaking Bangkok residents

come here for all sorts of treatments. The clinic is spacious, and staff is well-trained and efficient. Several doctors are employed and Dr. Trisha, who was brought up in the US, but born Thai, also speaks fluently English and Dr. Donna is fluent in Thai.

Dr. Donna rushes from one treatment room to another with a constant smile, beautiful dark curls, and vibrant lips. She is petite and delicate, and I always think of her as a lively little squirrel with curious eyes.

It's a huge advantage to be able to consult a doctor in English, especially if you haven't managed to learn Thai. Even more so when the doctor takes the time to explain everything thoroughly.

When Dr. Donna moved to Thailand, she passed the Thai Medical Exams in 1998 and since then worked for the largest international hospitals, before opening her Bangkok own clinic in 2003.

Recently the opening of MedConsult Clinic New Aesthetics Room took place. This new part of the clinic invites you to relax in a modern designed space, offers advanced equipment and private setting for consultations with the expert team.

If you wish to find out more, just drop by. Even if the waiting room is full, there is someone ready to take care of you or answer your questions.



# A Busy and Delicious time in Bangkok!

The end of January and the beginning of February was a lively and eventful month for me, as I had several visitors in Bangkok. I spent a lot of time exploring the city with them, revisiting familiar places and discovering new gems along the way. One of the highlights was, of course, the incredible variety of restaurants we tried.

One of the most memorable dining experiences was at **Sri Trat (Sukhumvit Soi 33)**, a charming and authentic Thai restaurant with an extensive menu. The food was rich in flavors and quite spicy, making it a great place for those who appreciate bold Thai cuisine. Due to its popularity, booking in advance was essential.

Another great spot we enjoyed was **Monsoon (Sukhumvit Soi 8)**, which offered a relaxed atmosphere with a lovely terrace—perfect for people-watching on a bustling street. It was an ideal place to unwind and enjoy good food in a casual setting.

For a livelier experience, **Lily Fu's (Sukhumvit Soi 11)** stood out. With its vibrant and colorful décor, friendly staff, and a fantastic selection of food and drinks, it had a welcoming and energetic vibe. One of the staff greeted us in Swedish and told us she had lived in Stockholm and now got a Swedish boyfriend.

In the evenings, the place transforms into a lively venue with a DJ and dancing, making it a fun spot to end the night.

## A memorable Birthday Celebration at Indigo.

During my friends' visit, I also happened to celebrate my birthday. I wanted to be surrounded by good friends, so I chose one of my favorite restaurants – Indigo on Convent Road, near the Sala Daeng Skytrain station.

Indigo is a charming French bistro with a beautiful, romantic garden that glows with warm lights in the evening. Ever since I had my first meal there, I've been hooked. The food is simple yet absolutely delicious, and the wine list is fantastic. I couldn't have picked a better place to celebrate with friends.

To make the night even more special, their pâtissier created a cake that was a true masterpiece. It was a wonderful and unforgettable evening, filled with laughter, great food, and the joy of being in the company of dear friends.



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*After all, what could be better than celebrating a birthday with old friends gathered around the table?*

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After all, what could be better than celebrating a birthday with old friends gathered around the table?

My old Swedish friend Johan Davidsson, is one of the most energetic people I know in Bangkok. He has an uncanny ability to spot places that are destined to become the city's next big thing – whether it's hotels, bars, restaurants, or clubs. With his sharp instincts and natural talent for creating buzz, he knows exactly how to make a venue stand out and attract the right crowd.

Right now, he's part of an exciting new beach club concept at the "**Marriott Town Hall**" on Sukhumvit 49, the park and the club are big, both indoor and outdoor. If anyone can turn it into the place to be, it's Johan. Worth a visit.

February has offered a few wonderfully cool days – I wish there were more of them. Unfortunately, there's also been quite a bit of pollution. Now you can already sense that summer is on its way.

More about what's happening in Bangkok in my next column. Stay tuned.

# H&M strengthens content creator strategy in Asia with new partnership

Swedish fashion retailer H&M has partnered with the creative agency We Are Social to enhance its content creator strategy and engagement across Asia. The collaboration, announced on Monday 25 February 2025, will focus on influencer marketing to strengthen H&M's regional presence.

We Are Social's Singapore hub will lead the initiative, working closely with local teams to develop tailored strategies and manage influencer partnerships. The partnership is expected to support H&M's



efforts in reaching fashion-focused audiences across key Asian markets.

Elin Sandberg, H&M's Head of Marketing for East Asia, stated

that the brand is looking to deepen engagement with its fashion community through collaborations with content creators.

H&M has been expanding its digital marketing efforts in the region, adapting to changing consumer behaviors and increasing reliance on social media platforms.

The partnership is part of H&M's broader strategy to maintain its competitive position in the Asian market.

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# \$1.3 billion LEGO factory in Vietnam to open in April



LEGO Group, the Danish toy-maker known worldwide for its iconic plastic bricks, will in April this spring officially open its new \$1.3 billion factory in Binh Duong province, southern Vietnam. The facility, located in the VSIP III Industrial Park, marks Lego's first carbon-neutral plant globally and represents one of the largest Danish investments in Southeast Asia.

Construction of the 44.8-hectare factory began in November 2022, with trial production starting in November 2024. The official open is set for April 2025. The factory is expected to employ 4,000 people and significantly expand Lego's production capacity to serve the growing Asian market.

The plant incorporates eco-friendly technology, including the installation of 12,400 rooftop solar cells with a total capacity of 7.34 MWp. Additionally, a 40-hectare solar power farm has been developed nearby to support the factory's operations.

Lego CEO Niels B. Christiansen previously emphasized the strategic importance of Vietnam in the company's global expansion. The country's skilled workforce, strong infrastructure, and central location

in Asia were key factors in Lego's decision to build the factory in Binh Duong province.

The new facility is Lego's sixth global production site and second in Asia after the one in Jiaxing, China, which opened in 2016.

"Our new factory, LEGO Manufacturing Vietnam, in Binh Duong province and wanted to clarify that the factory is not yet officially open," writes LEGO Groups head of communications, Liz Stewart to ScandAsia in reaction to ScandAsia incorrectly writing that the factory is open.

"After Tet, all colleagues did move from a temporary office in Ho Chi Minh City to a newly opened office building on-site at our new factory. However, our factory will only officially open later this spring," Liz Stewart explains.

# IKEA Malaysia launches online store for customers in Sabah and Sarawak

IKEA Malaysia has expanded its reach by launching an online store specifically for customers in Sabah and Sarawak. This initiative allows residents in these regions to purchase IKEA products at prices consistent with those in Peninsular Malaysia.

To enhance delivery efficiency, IKEA has established a new fulfillment center in Kuching, ensuring faster order processing and shipment to customers in East Malaysia.

Malcolm Pruys, Country Retail Director of IKEA Malaysia, emphasized the company's commitment to accessibility:

“At IKEA, we are passionate about creating a better everyday life for the many people. Our customers in Sabah and Sarawak have been instrumental in making IKEA a beloved brand in Malaysia. As we strive to expand our reach and meet the diverse needs of Malaysians, we are always exploring new ways for them to interact with the brand. Therefore, we are thrilled to launch this dedicated online store, making our home furnishing solutions more accessible to our customers here and enjoy the same affordable prices as those in Peninsular Malaysia,” Malcolm Pruys says.



# Carlsberg strengthens position in China's premium beer market

Carlsberg Group, the Danish brewing company, reported a 1.9 percent increase in revenue in 2024, totaling DKK 75.01 billion (\$10.37 billion), and a 2.8 percent rise in operating profit, reaching DKK 11.41 billion.

In China, Carlsberg's market share increased. Carlsberg's CEO, Jacob Aarup-Andersen, notes that while the Chinese beer market declined by 4 percent in 2024 due to a weak consumer environment and poor summer weather, signs of recovery were evident in the fourth quarter. The company aims to further expand its market share in China and outperform overall market growth in 2025.

Industry experts highlight that self-pleasing consumption, diversification, and personalization are shaping the next phase of China's



premium beer segment. Craft beer has steadily gained traction, now holding 8 percent of the domestic beer market, leading to a surge in new craft and microbreweries catering to niche markets. Currently, China has over 10,000 craft breweries with an annual production of less than 100,000 metric tons.

Carlsberg experienced mixed results across its Southeast Asian

markets during the year 2024. The company reported strong volume growth in Vietnam and Malaysia, which helped offset declines in other regions. In Laos, volumes grew by a low-single-digit percentage, reaching an all-time high of over 8 million hectoliters, despite macroeconomic challenges and several price increases during the year. However, in Cambodia, the company faced a continued volume decline in its Sting energy brand.

Carlsberg's presence in Thailand remains a sad chapter in the history of the group.

Overall, Carlsberg's performance in Southeast Asia reflects a combination of market-specific challenges and successes, contributing to the company's strategic focus on premiumization and sustainable growth in the region.

# Norse Atlantic launches direct flights to Thailand



**N**orse Atlantic Airways has announced a new direct route between London Gatwick Airport (LGW) and Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK), set to begin on Sunday 26 October 2025. This marks the airline's first entry into the Asian market, offering a new low-cost travel option between Thailand and the UK.

The London-Bangkok service will operate up to four times per week, catering to both leisure and business travelers. Tickets are avail-

able on the airline's website, with fares designed to make long-haul travel more affordable. To book your ticket, visit [flynorse.com](http://flynorse.com)

"We are thrilled to introduce Bangkok as our first destination in Asia," says Bjørn Tore Larsen, CEO and Founder of Norse Atlantic Airways.

"This new service underscores our commitment to connecting travelers with culturally rich and diverse destinations at affordable prices."

Passengers on the route will fly

aboard Norse Atlantic's Boeing 787 Dreamliner, with a choice between Economy and Premium cabins. The Premium cabin offers extra comfort with a 43-inch seat pitch and a 12-inch recline for a more relaxing journey.

With this new route, Norse Atlantic expands its network to South-east Asia, providing a budget-friendly alternative for travelers heading to Thailand.

Norse Atlantic Airways does not operate direct flights from any of the Nordic capitals to London Gatwick Airport (LGW). However, travelers from Nordic countries can connect to Norse Atlantic's new London-Bangkok service via flights operated by other carriers. For instance, Norwegian Air Shuttle offers direct flights from Oslo Gardermoen Airport (OSL) and Stockholm Arlanda Airport (ARN) to London Gatwick. Passengers can book these flights separately to align with Norse Atlantic's Bangkok departures.

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# China Evergrande's EV unit to sell 20% stake in Swedish firm for tax needs

**C**hina Evergrande Group's electric vehicle (EV) unit has agreed to sell its 20% stake in Swedish real estate property lessor AB Trollhättan Propellern 13 for 60 million Swedish krona (\$5.63 million), according to Reuters on Tuesday 25 February. The sale comes as the embattled company seeks to meet tax payments and other financial obligations.

Evergrande, which was ordered into liquidation by a Hong Kong court in January 2024 follow-



ing its offshore debt default, remains the world's most indebted property developer, with over \$300 billion in liabilities. Its EV subsidiary, which once aspired to compete with in-

dustry leaders like Tesla, has struggled amid the parent company's financial turmoil.

The sale of the stake to Logistikfastigheter i Trollhättan AB is expected to result in a disposal loss of 23.8 million krona, further underscoring the company's financial challenges.

Evergrande has been offloading assets as it continues to navigate its financial crisis, with the latest transaction reflecting ongoing efforts to stabilize its operations.

# Goodbye to Danish Church Chairman John Iversen

Danish Seamen's Church in Singapore invites all Danes in Singapore for a special church service on Sunday 16 March 2025, at 11:00, followed by a farewell reception for the Chairman of the Church, John Iversen.

John Iversen has for many years been the strong foundation for the Church as well as a board member of DABS.

"We are very grateful for his efforts and wish him all the best of luck in his new surroundings," writes Pastor Carl Bjarkam in the invitation from the Church.

John Iversen has been in the shipping business all his life and has the past forty years lived in Singapore.

His career began with Maersk Line, where he spent ten years gaining insight into the industry from a ship owner's perspective. He later transitioned to freight forwarding, including running his own company in Singapore for a decade.

For the past 35 years, Iversen has specialized in project logistics.

Additionally, he is a Solution Design Manager, Asia Pacific at Maersk Project Logistics (part-time) and an Associate Lecturer at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS).

Beyond his corporate roles, Iversen has contributed to industry organizations, including serving on the council of the Singapore Logis-



tics Association (SLA) and chairing its sea freight committee.

John Iversen will move to Australia to be closer to his children and grandchild.

# Indonesia seeks funding for Danish and Norwegian waste management technology

Indonesia is exploring opportunities to procure waste management technology from Denmark and Norway, according to the country's Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment.

The ministry's deputy for environmental and forestry management, Nani Hendiarti, stated that Indonesia is looking for funding sources to support the acquisition of advanced waste processing technology from the two Nordic countries.

"We are working to secure funding for waste management technology from Denmark and Norway to improve our waste processing capabilities," says Hendiarti, according to Antara News.



Denmark and Norway are known for their expertise in sustainable waste management solutions, including advanced recycling systems and waste-to-energy technologies. Indonesia is particularly interested in these innovations to

address its waste challenges and reduce environmental impact.

The initiative aligns with Indonesia's broader efforts to strengthen sustainability and environmental protection through international collaboration.

# StarHub and Nokia launch Singapore's first nationwide 10 Gbps broadband network

StarHub has completed the nationwide rollout of Nokia's XGS-PON technology, making it the first operator in Singapore to offer 10 Gbps broadband speeds across the entire country. The milestone, achieved in collaboration with Finnish telecom giant Nokia, marks a major advancement in Singapore's digital infrastructure.

This upgrade, part of Singapore's Digital Connectivity Blueprint, enhances broadband capacity for AI applications, immersive gaming, and advanced security solutions. It also enables StarHub to introduce premium digital services while optimizing network efficiency through AI-driven operations.

Lee Yeu Ching, Vice President of Fixed and Media Networks at



StarHub, highlighted the importance of this deployment as part of the company's Cloud Infinity Strategy.

"Nokia, our longstanding partner, has played a vital role in this successful transition to XGS-PON. This upgrade will accelerate the adoption of 10 Gbps services, supporting Singapore's national digital transforma-

tion plan," he said.

StarHub is also the first telecom provider worldwide to migrate fully to a software-defined access network (SDAN) using Nokia's Altiplano solution. This AI-powered system enhances network management by enabling real-time issue detection and optimization of network resources.

Ming Kin Ngiam, Head of SEA South for Network Infrastructure Sales at Nokia, emphasized the significance of this development.

"We are entering the Fiber for Everything era. Next-generation PON and automation help operators unlock the full potential of fiber networks. StarHub is setting a new benchmark in network modernization," he said.

# Novo Nordisk sues Singapore biotech firm over \$1.3 billion acquisition dispute



Novo Nordisk, the Danish pharmaceutical giant, has filed a lawsuit against Singapore-based KBP Biosciences and its founder, Huang Zhenhua, alleging KBP Biosciences misrepresented the effectiveness of an experimental hypertension drug, Ocedurenone, during a \$1.3 billion acquisition in 2023. The dispute has led to a global freeze on Huang's and KBP's assets, ordered by the Singapore International Commercial Court.

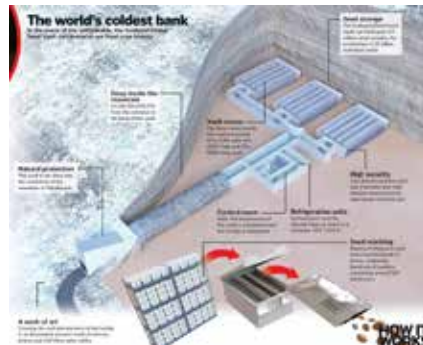
The lawsuit centers on Ocedurenone, the drug that Novo Nordisk acquired as part of its purchase

of KBP Biosciences. Novo Nordisk claims that it was misled about the drug's potential and is now seeking up to \$830 million in damages through arbitration in New York. According to the company, the information provided during the acquisition process did not accurately reflect the drug's actual qualities.

KBP Biosciences and Huang Zhenhua have not publicly responded to the allegations. Meanwhile, Novo Nordisk has not provided additional comments beyond the legal filings.

# Thai rice now deposited in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault, often referred to as the “doomsday” vault, has recently received over 14,000 new seed samples, including rice seeds from Thailand. This facility, located deep within a mountain on a remote Norwegian Arctic island, serves as a global backup for crop diversity, safeguarding seeds from potential global catastrophes such as nuclear war or climate change.



Established in 2008, the vault now houses more than 1.3 million seed samples from around the world. The recent deposit also includes seeds of Nordic tree species from Sweden and various sorghum varieties from Sudan, highlighting the vault’s role in preserving both biodiversity and cultural heritage.

# Yinson Production strengthens carbon capture presence with Norwegian acquisition

Singapore-based floater owner and operator Yinson Production has acquired 100% of the shares in Stella Maris CCS from UK floater company Altera Infrastructure.

Stella Maris specializes in carbon capture and storage (CCS), covering the entire CCS value chain—from carbon capture and intermediate storage to offshore transportation and permanent CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration for industrial sources.

Stella Maris holds a 40% stake in the Havstjerne Reservoir on the Norwegian Continental Shelf, a project developed in collaboration with Harbour Energy.

The European Union’s Innovation Fund has recognized the Havstjerne project with a grant of up to €225 million, marking the largest EU grant awarded to a CCS initiative.



This acquisition enhances Yinson Production’s role in the low-carbon market and underscores its commitment to supporting the global energy transition.

Lars Gunnar Vogt, Yinson Pro-

duction’s Chief Technical Officer, said the move aligns with the company’s strategy to drive innovation and sustainability in the energy sector, aiding industrial emitters in achieving their decarbonization goals.

# Finnish Neste ready to deliver its renewable diesel in Singapore



Finnish renewable fuels producer Neste is now ready to serve the marine industry with renewable diesel, produced from 100% renewable raw materials, after

a successful first delivery of the fuel in November 2024 to a cruise ship at the Singapore Cruise Terminal.

The milestone marks Neste's expansion into the maritime sector as shipping companies seek cleaner fuel alternatives to meet decarbonization goals. The delivery was completed in collaboration with fuel distributor KPI OceanConnect and Singapore-based Global Energy, making it the first time Neste MY Renewable Diesel has been supplied to the marine industry in Singapore.

Neste's renewable diesel is a

drop-in replacement for fossil diesel, requiring no modifications to existing engines. It can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90% over its lifecycle compared to conventional diesel, making it an attractive option for ship operators looking to lower their environmental footprint.

Singapore, as one of the world's busiest maritime hubs, is seen as a key market for sustainable fuel adoption. The success of Neste's first marine fuel delivery sets a precedent for wider use of renewable diesel in the region's shipping industry.

# Danish Topsoe signs agreement with FatHopes Energy to explore sustainable aviation fuel production in Malaysia



Danish carbon reduction technology leader Topsoe has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Malaysia-based FatHopes Energy to assess the feasibility of developing a Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) refinery in Malaysia. The partnership aims to utilize waste-based oils, such as used cooking oil, to produce renewable aviation fuels, supporting the aviation industry's decarbonization efforts.

Under the agreement, Topsoe will provide its HydroFlex® technology, catalyst solutions, and engineering expertise to evaluate the project's viability. The feasibility study will determine the strategic potential of establishing an SAF facility in Malaysia, aligning with global sustainability targets and Malaysia's energy diversification strategy.

Milica Folic, Product Line Director at Topsoe, emphasized the company's commitment to advanc-

ing renewable fuel technologies:

"This collaboration with FatHopes Energy reflects our mission to accelerate the energy transition by delivering innovative, sustainable fuel solutions. Together, we aim to contribute to a lower-carbon aviation industry."

FatHopes Energy, a leading aggregator of biofuel feedstocks, will contribute its expertise in sourcing and processing waste-based raw materials, ensuring a steady supply for the proposed facility. Depending on the study's outcomes, the refinery could be operated by FatHopes Energy or licensed to a third-party operator.

The announcement comes ahead of the 36th Palm & Lauric Oils Price Outlook Conference & Exhibition (POC2025) in Kuala Lumpur, underscoring Malaysia's potential role as a regional hub for sustainable aviation fuel production.

# Finnish flea market chain takes stand against Chinese fast fashion

A popular Finnish flea market chain, Jussin Jättikirpis, has implemented a groundbreaking ban on fast fashion items at their locations, with their Porvoo branch leading the initiative against quickly produced, trend-driven clothing primarily manufactured in China.

The company announced on their website the specific ban targeting ultra-fast fashion brands including Temu, Shein, and Wish, marking a significant shift in their business approach towards more sustainable fashion practices.

According to Tua Salomaa, a representative from the chain's Porvoo location, the decision was implemented at the end of last fall after growing concerns about the



quality and safety of these garments.

"These items often contain toxins and are of poor quality," Tua Salomaa explained, highlighting the environmental and health concerns associated with such products.

The implementation of the ban has prompted mixed reactions from the local community. While many customers have expressed strong support for the environmental initiative, others have shown disappoint-

ment due to limitations on what they can sell.

The flea market's staff now conducts daily evening inspections of sales tables to ensure compliance with the new policy. When fast fashion items or counterfeits are identified, they are removed from sale and the owners are contacted. In some cases, due to concerns about toxic materials and plastics, the items are disposed of properly.

This initiative by Jussin Jättikirpis aligns with a growing international trend, as various secondhand retail platforms worldwide have begun implementing similar restrictions on fast fashion items, contributing to the broader dialogue about sustainable fashion practices and responsible recycling.

# Norwegian Helly Hansen acquired by Kontoor Brands for \$900 Million

Norwegian apparel brand Helly Hansen has been sold to American company Kontoor Brands, known for owning Wrangler and Lee, for approximately \$900 million (around 10 billion NOK). Most of Helly Hansen's maritime and leisure wear is produced in Asia, including Vietnam, China and Bangladesh. The company will continue to operate from its headquarters in Oslo.

Scott Baxter, President and CEO of Kontoor Brands, expressed enthusiasm about the acquisition, stating plans to scale up Helly Hansen's operations. CFO Joe Alkire noted that the purchase is expected to accelerate Kontoor Brands' growth and earnings potential.

Founded in 1877 by Captain



Helly Juell Hansen in Moss, Norway, Helly Hansen has undergone several ownership changes over the years. The brand was owned by Orkla Group in the 1970s, sold to British investors in the 1990s, acquired by Altor Equity Partners in 2006, and later by Ontario Teachers' Pension

Plan in 2012. Canadian Tire Corporation purchased Helly Hansen in 2018 for approximately 6 billion NOK.

The acquisition by Kontoor Brands is expected to be finalized in the second quarter of 2025, pending necessary approvals.

# Danish and Norwegian designed cultural landmarks to open in Shanghai



Shanghai is set to unveil the West Bund Theater, designed by Danish architectural firm Schmidt Hammer Lassen (SHL). Located along the Huangpu River in Xuhui District, the venue blends art and leisure, offering spaces for performances and social gatherings.

The theater will partially open between March 7 and April 26, with

a full opening on April 27, according to the Xuhui District Culture and Tourism Bureau.

Spanning 23,000 square meters, the theater's facade features flowing lines inspired by ripples on the riverbank, mirroring the adjacent Huangpu River. Inside, the lobby showcases glass walls and warm earth tones, while a mirror-polished stainless steel ceiling creates a reflective, water-like effect. The main auditorium has 1,673 seats, alongside a smaller 208-seat hall. An advanced sound system ensures an immersive audio experience.

Located near attractions such as TANK Shanghai and the West Bund Museum, the venue also fea-

tures pet-friendly outdoor areas with rest zones.

Meanwhile, another Nordic-designed cultural landmark, the Shanghai Grand Opera House, is being developed by Norwegian firm Snøhetta. Renowned for its nature-inspired designs, Snøhetta's opera house is expected to redefine Shanghai's performing arts landscape.

Upcoming March events at the West Bund Theater include Ado's stage play *Reborn Beats* and the *Musical Stars Gala Concert*.

These projects highlight the influence of Danish and Norwegian architecture in shaping Shanghai's cultural spaces.

## Photo exhibition about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal process

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) has launched a photo exhibition titled "Lessons from the Past: A Visual Journey through the Khmer Rouge Tribunal Process." This exhibition aims to educate future generations about the experiences of civil parties during the Khmer Rouge regime and the tribunal proceedings.

The exhibition features a collection of photographs that document the tribunal's efforts in seeking justice for the atrocities committed during the Khmer Rouge era. It serves as a visual narrative of the legal processes and the personal stories of those affected.



Nordic countries, particularly Sweden, have played a significant role in supporting the ECCC. Swedish legal experts have been involved in the tribunal, contributing to its establishment and operations. For instance, Hans Corell, former Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and the Legal Counsel of the UN, served as the UN's Chief Negotiator for the ECCC.

The exhibition not only highlights the tribunal's work but also underscores the international collaboration, including contributions from Nordic countries, in addressing past human rights violations and promoting justice.

For those interested in viewing the exhibition, it is currently open to the public at the ECCC premises. Additionally, selected photographs are available online through the tribunal's official Flickr account.

This initiative reflects ongoing efforts to preserve the history of the Khmer Rouge period and educate future generations on the importance of justice and reconciliation.

# Danish divers lead cave exploration expedition in Indonesia

Two Danish diving instructors have played a key role in the Buteng 2025 Expedition, an international effort to explore and document the underwater cave systems of Buteng Regency in South-east Sulawesi, Indonesia. The expedition aims to map the region's submerged caves, study its unique biodiversity, and support Buteng's application for UNESCO Global Geopark status.

Expedition Buteng kicked off on October 13th when a 28-person team of cave divers, dry cavers, scientists, scholars, media professionals, and Muna collaborators joined forces in Pulau Muna, South Sulawesi, Indonesia for what has been dubbed as Expedition Buteng.

The expedition was led by Danish cave diving instructor Maria



Bollerup and Rannva Joermundsson from the Faroe Islands. Both divers bring extensive experience in cave diving and underwater exploration.

The Buteng cave system is largely uncharted, with complex underwater passages, freshwater ecosystems, and unique geological features. The team uses specialized diving equipment and 3D-mapping technology to create accurate maps of the submerged caves. The project also involves collecting data to help local authorities and scientists better

understand the region's biodiversity.

The initiative supports Buteng's aspirations to become a UNESCO Global Geopark, which would boost eco-tourism in the area while raising awareness about the region's natural heritage and the need for environmental protection.

"This expedition was not just about exploration; it's about contributing to local knowledge and helping Buteng achieve recognition for its geological and ecological significance," says expedition leader Maria Bollerup.

The Buteng 2025 Expedition has drawn attention from both local and international media, as it showcases how Nordic expertise in cave diving can contribute to scientific research and community development in Southeast Asia.

# Thai massage parlours in Sweden accept wellness allowance to be used for sexual services

A recent investigation by Swedish Radio has uncovered that several Thai massage parlours associated with sexual services are listed on Epassi, a digital platform widely used in Sweden for wellness allowances.

The investigation revealed that out of 100 salons contacted, half were willing to let customers use their wellness allowances to pay for services not covered by the scheme, including sexual services.

The wellness allowance is intended for regulated health and fitness activities, such as gym memberships, massage therapy, yoga, and

physiotherapy. Since sexual services are neither a recognized medical treatment nor a fitness activity, they do not qualify.

Prostitution is furthermore illegal in Sweden, both for sellers and buyers under the Swedish Sex Purchase Act. This means that regardless of potential well-being benefits, sexual services cannot be recognized as a legitimate health expense. Therefore, neither the Swedish government nor the majority of corporate policies recognize it as part of an employee health program.

The findings raise concerns about the effectiveness of current



regulations and oversight mechanisms implemented. The finding also raises questions about the platform's vetting processes and the possible need for the platform to enforce stricter controls to ensure that only non-sexual wellness providers are included.

# Navigating legal rules: Danes in Thailand joined Embassy information evening



**O**n February 5, the Danish expatriate community in Thailand gathered at the Royal Danish Embassy in Bangkok for an informative evening titled Global Danes in Thailand. Organized by Danes Worldwide in collaboration with the Danish-Thai Chamber of Commerce (DTCC) and the Embassy of Denmark, the event provided updates on family reunification,

citizenship retention, pensions, and returning to Denmark.

With nearly all seats filled, Marianne Edelmann Krüger, Danes Worldwide's representative in Bangkok, opened the session. Ambassador Danny Annan followed, offering insights into the embassy's work and commenting on ongoing EU-Thailand Free Trade Agreement negotiations. While Thailand anticipated a swift conclusion, he noted that the EU's ambitious demands, including equal rights in public contracts, might extend the timeline.

Michael Andersen, DTCC's Executive Director, highlighted joint efforts to support Danes in Thailand before an online presentation by Michael Bach Petersen, Secretary Gen-

eral of Danes Worldwide, and legal advisor Lisbeth Kjersgaard. They explained the simplified family reunification process for Danes with foreign spouses—especially for those over 24 with three years of full-time work experience. Citizenship retention rules for children born abroad and Danish pension eligibility were also discussed.

After enjoying refreshments from Stable Lodge, attendees participated in an interactive Q&A session. The event, sponsored by Pandora, concluded with networking and further discussions.

For those who missed it, Danes Worldwide and the DTCC will share key insights online and remain available for further inquiries.

# Norwegian Church in Pattaya hosts confirmation camp for Nordic youth in Asia

**T**he Norwegian Church in Pattaya recently hosted a confirmation camp for Norwegian youth from Thailand, Singapore, Australia, and Japan. The event brought together young confirmands for a week of learning, discussions, and activities centered around the theme of human dignity—in relation to oneself, others, and faith in a world of contrasts.

Leading the camp were Hilde Sirnes, the traveling Seamen's Church pastor for Asia, Sjur Askjer, the pastor in Singapore, and Håvard Osland, deacon for Australia and New Zealand. The local church team in Pattaya, including Helle Maria,



Bjørn Inge, and Jeanine, organized and contributed to the program.

Throughout the week, confirmands took part in excursions, discussions, and community-building activities, culminating in their participation in the Sunday service on February 9 at 11:00 AM at the Norwegian Church in Pattaya. The service

featured a simplified liturgy, a prayer walk with communion, and contributions from the confirmands. Music was provided by Øystein, Bjørn Inge, Jeanine, and others.

Following the service, attendees gathered for church coffee and fellowship. Visitors to the church during the week may have seen confirmands coming and going, and the church community welcomed them warmly.

The Norwegian Church in Pattaya remains open Wednesday to Sunday from 12:00 to 16:00, providing a space for the Scandinavian community to gather, worship, and engage in meaningful discussions.

# Swedish actor promotes Peking Opera to young audiences

Timothy Pilotti is a Swedish actor who has dedicated his career to bridging cultures through Peking Opera, an art form that has fascinated him since childhood. His passion, rooted in early exposure to Jackie Chan's acrobatic performances, has now evolved into a mission to introduce young audiences in Sweden to this traditional Chinese theater style.

On Monday 25 February, the official Chinese news media China Daily featured an article about Pilotti, highlighting his dedication to promoting Peking Opera to young audiences in Sweden.

Pilotti, 37, initially pursued physical theater at a Finnish university before delving into Peking Opera's stylized movements and stage

combat. In 2022, he launched The Monkey King, a children's theater production inspired by the legendary Chinese character. The show, which incorporates elements of Peking Opera, has been performed over 150 times across Sweden.

To deepen audience engagement, Pilotti integrates interactive elements, allowing children to experience the agility and expressiveness of Peking Opera firsthand. He also conducts workshops, teaching young participants the basics of the art form's movements.

Beyond his theater work, Pilotti has become a prominent advocate for cultural exchange between China and Sweden. He frequently appears on variety shows, social media platforms, and academic forums,



sharing insights as a young Sinologist. His efforts have gained recognition online, with many praising his dedication to preserving and promoting traditional Chinese culture.

Looking ahead, Pilotti hopes to foster collaborations between Chinese Peking Opera artists and Swedish actors, aiming to further enrich artistic exchanges between the two cultures.

# Thai student shares experience with Finland's education system

The University of Jyväskylä recently featured an article by Thai student Pattarada Sangnark, who is pursuing a Master's Degree in Language, Globalization, and Intercultural Communication. In her piece, she shares her experiences with Finland's unique educational approach, highlighting its emphasis on critical thinking and student-centered learning.

Pattarada notes that Finnish education encourages freedom of expression, allowing students to challenge ideas and engage in open discussions with professors.

"It is possible for me to disagree with the professors, if there are supporting reasons for my stance," Pattarada writes.

"Rather than memorizing the lecture for traditional exams, this

kind of assignment enhances my critical-thinking skills and encourages me to find my own voice."

Finnish universities often use learning portfolios, which require students to critically reflect on course materials and connect them to personal experiences and perspectives.

She also appreciates the multicultural learning environment at the University of Jyväskylä, where group work and discussions with classmates from diverse backgrounds help enrich the academic experience.

Pattarada's journey to Finland was influenced by her international outlook and previous studies in China and the UK, as well as her work as a freelance English-Thai interpreter at the Embassy of Finland in



Bangkok. These experiences led her to choose Finland for her master's studies, and she expresses satisfaction with her decision, stating that the Finnish teaching approach has exceeded her expectations.

Her story offers valuable insights for prospective international students considering Finland for higher education, showcasing the country's distinctive academic methods and the enriching experience available at Finnish universities.

# DABS spring party 2025 set for a festive night in Singapore

The Danish Business Association of Singapore (DABS) is gearing up for its much-anticipated Spring Party 2025, set to take place on March 15 at Panamericana, Sentosa. The event promises an evening filled with stunning ocean views, delicious food, free-flow drinks, and an unmistakable Danish atmosphere.

As one of the biggest social gatherings for the Danish and Nordic business community in Singapore, the DABS Spring Party is a highlight of the year, bringing together members and friends for a night of celebration and networking.

Tickets are now on sale, and attendees are encouraged to secure their spots early to avoid missing out on this unforgettable evening.



# Swedish footballer's surprising new life in Thailand



Norwegian news outlet Dagbladet has published on 23 February 2025 an article about Swedish footballer Kevin Lidin, whose career took an unexpected turn after injuries derailed his professional ambitions. Once a rising star in Italy's Serie C, Lidin found himself at a crossroads, ultimately leading him to Thailand, where he discovered a new passion in yoga and meditation.

According to Dagbladet, Lidin's transformation shocked those who knew him as a dedicated athlete striving for success in European football. The article explores how he embraced an alternative lifestyle in Thailand, moving away from the competitive sports world to focus on inner balance and mindfulness.

Kevin Lidin's story adds to the growing trend of athletes and professionals finding solace and purpose in Thailand's wellness and spiritual retreats. His experience highlights the country's appeal beyond tourism, serving as a destination for personal reinvention.

## From Football to Meditation

Kevin Lidin officially stepped away

from professional football in 2021 following a series of injuries. Since then, he has dedicated himself to a life centered around yoga and meditation, taking up residence in Thailand, where he continues his practice and now teaches others.

A major turning point in his transformation was participating in the "30-day monk life project," a structured program in Thailand where he immersed himself in Buddhist monastic practices. This deep engagement with mindfulness and self-discipline led him to further explore the spiritual and meditative aspects of Thai culture.

Today, Lidin shares his journey and insights through social media, where he documents his experiences and encourages others to pursue personal growth beyond traditional career paths. He has also been involved with iMONASTERY International, a platform that promotes spiritual teachings and monastic experiences.

Kevin Lidin's continued involvement in these activities suggests he remains committed to his new life. So far, there are no indications that he plans to return to professional football.

# SWEA Bangkok's annual meeting with Ambassador Hammargren



On February 25, SWEA Bangkok held its annual meeting, this time at the Swedish Embassy in One Pacific Tower on Sukhumvit, making it easily accessible by BTS.

The evening began with a glass of sparkling wine in the embassy's canteen before members moved to the conference room, where Ambassador H.E. Anna Hammargren joined them.

Anna has now served as Sweden's ambassador in Bangkok for one and a half years. Before coming to Thailand, she was Chief of Staff at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Her diplomatic career spans postings in Africa and Paris, backed by a strong academic background. In Bangkok, she is accompanied by her husband, while their three children study in Sweden.

Anna spoke highly of her 65 colleagues at the embassy, which covers not only Thailand but also Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. She noted that approximately 8,000 Swedes currently reside in Thailand, many of whom are retirees or professionals working with Swedish companies. Meanwhile, around 70,000 Thai nationals live in Sweden.

The ambassador has traveled extensively across Thailand, engaging with Swedish businesses and organizations such as SWECHAM, Business Sweden, and SWEA. She emphasized Sweden's long-standing diplomatic ties with Thailand, spanning over 150 years, and highlighted the positive perception of Swedes in Thai society. She also touched on global developments, including Sweden's NATO membership and Thailand's recent legalization of same-

sex marriage.

Following her insightful talk, members enjoyed canapés from Mamma's Kök before proceeding with the official annual meeting. Annika Larsson, the outgoing chair, led proceedings smoothly, welcoming Hayoung Ekhaga as the new chair. Several board members remained to support the transition.

The evening concluded on a high note, with members appreciating the opportunity to hear directly from the ambassador and looking forward to SWEA Bangkok's future under new leadership.

*By Agneta de Bekassy*



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